

# Appendix 3 – Home to School Transport Cost Pressures

## Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**06<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

# Budget Forecast P6 2023/24

- As at Period 6, Home to School Transport is forecast to spend £31.977m against a budget of £22.477m. This is an overspend of £9.5m (42%)
- For context, 2022/23 outturn for this budget was £24.844m. If the current forecast is accurate, year-on-year spend will have increased by 29%
- There are almost 11,500 pupils currently transported by the service, of which around 1,900 are pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEND)
- The following slide shows a breakdown of pupil numbers and an estimated average cost per year for each category

# Home to School Transport – Baseline Data

Key Area of Eligibility	Forecast £m	Pupil Numbers	Cost per pupil (£000)
SEND – Transport provided on Need Grounds	7.0	753	9
SEND – Transport provided on Distance (statutory duty)	6.0	708	8
SEND – 19-25 Transport provided on Need Grounds	1.2	91	13
SEND – 16-19 Transport provided on Need Grounds	0.9	122	7
SEND – 16-19 provided on distance (statutory duty)	0.9	179	5
<b>SEND Total</b>	<b>16.0</b>	<b>1,853</b>	
Mainstream – statutory HTST policy (nearest school or designated)	4.7	5,413	1
Mainstream – unavailable routes	.2.5	1,651	2
Pupil Referral Unit	1.5	129	12
Mainstream – Severn Card, post 16	1.2	1,080	1
Mainstream – Severn Card, under 16	0.5	690	1
Remainder – e.g. low income, appeals, redesignation	5.4	669	8
<b>Total HTST</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>11,485</b>	

# Home to School Transport – Demand and Cost

## Cost Drivers behind increasing spend include:

Increase in children with EHCP:

3728 (2019)

5566 (2023)

49% increase

Increase in children with EHCP using HTST

1527 (2019)

2049 (2023)

34% increase

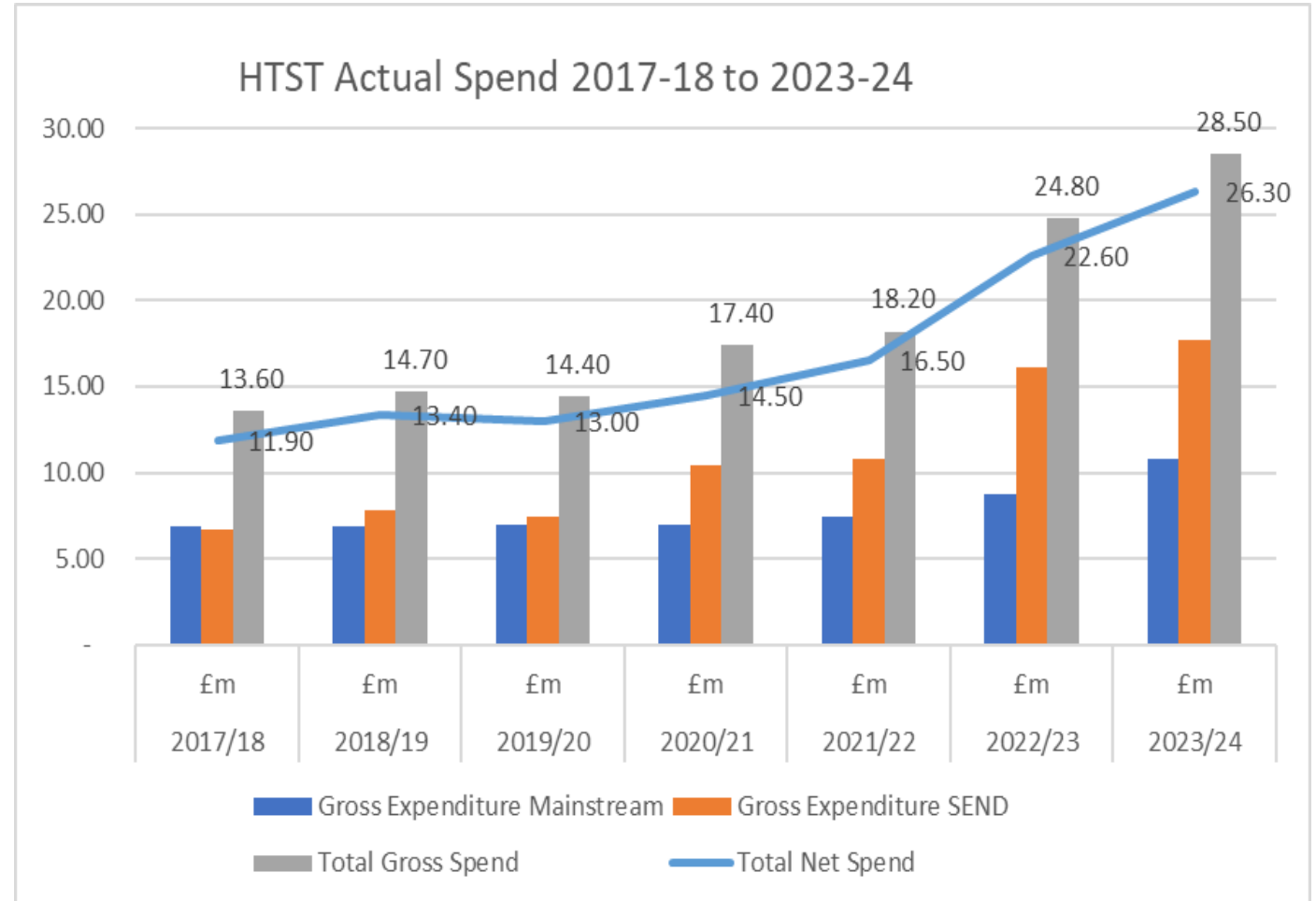
Increase in mainstream pupils

6295 (2019)

9143 (2023)

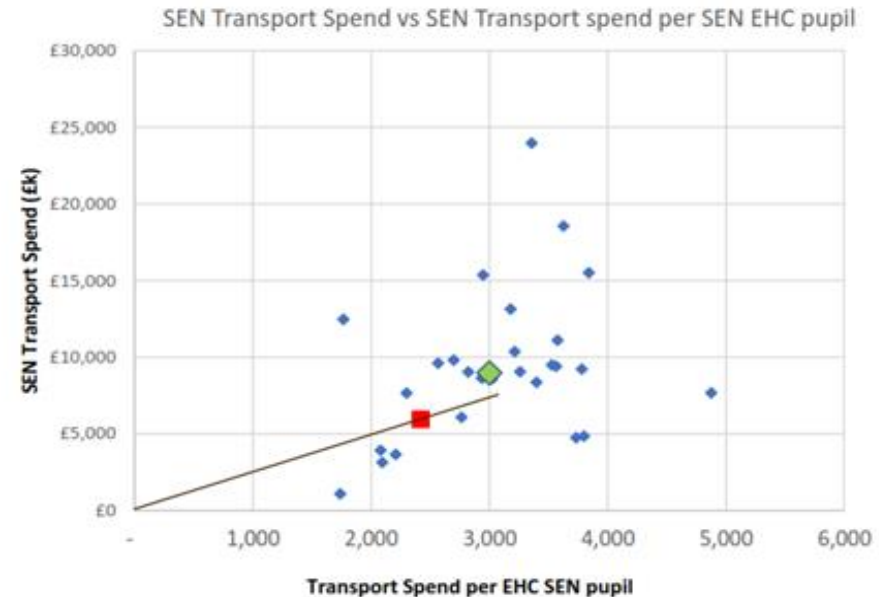
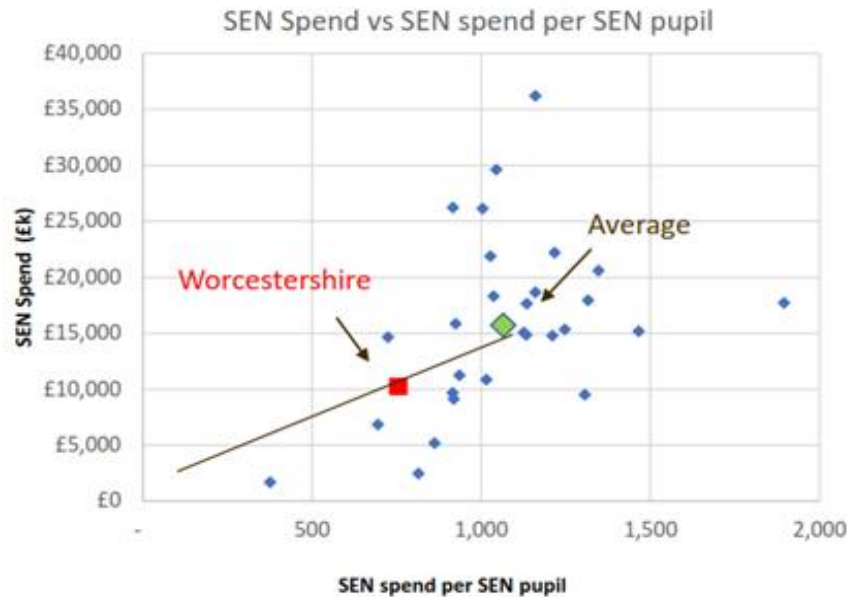
45% increase

(12% increase last year )



# Home to School Transport – Initial Review Findings (SEND)

The total costs and transport costs are significantly below average. Costs per pupil are well below average. If costs per SEN pupil were average, total costs would be c£4m higher. If transport costs per EHC SEN were average, transport costs would be c£2m higher.



# Home to School Transport – Demand vs Supply Analysis

**Demand 1: Number of Children in Worcestershire**  
**Demand 2: Children and Families 2014 Act**

**Supply 1: location of schools**  
**Supply 2: the provision of transport**  
**Supply 3: the provision of places looking at the whole system**

# Home to School Transport – Demand 1

Worcestershire County Council's public report on the 2021 census data, available on the Council website at the following link – [2021 Census data](#) – stated the following:

The number of children in Worcestershire is increasing, but the increase is not as pronounced as is being seen nationally. This has potential consequences for school and nursery provision, access to health care, GP services and dentists, family support services and housing. There are over 117,900 children living in Worcestershire, with numbers increasing by 2.6% since the 2011 census. Increases in numbers of children over the past ten years are notable in Bromsgrove and Wychavon and are **particularly high across the county in the 5-10 age group.**

# Home to School Transport – Demand 2

Below are themes of the 2014 Act which illustrate the difficulty for Local Authorities in approaching SEND placements (and associated transport requirements) from a cost-centric perspective:

Efficient education means providing for each child or young person a suitable, appropriate education in terms of their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The only reason the local authority can refuse the request is if:

- The setting is unsuitable for the age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs (“SEN”) of the child or young person; or
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the provision of efficient education for others; or
- The attendance of the child or young person would be incompatible with the efficient use of resources.



# Home to School Transport – Next Steps

- Given the pressures that we know about from the **demand** side, focus of Home to School Transport review will focus on **supply**.
- This will include commissioning and contract management arrangements
- Focus is how to lower our average cost to be closer to our West Midlands neighbours
- Further update to Scrutiny in the new year



# Any questions?